

GOSPA VERA

FRANCE BEVK

(Nadaljevanje)

Kolikokrat je trepetala zanj, da se mu kaj ne pripeti. Kadar je brala litanije samomorov v listih, je pomislila na svojega moža in nase. Ta hip je sedla v spodnji obleki na rob postelje in vse mogoče in nemogoče je šlo kot v dolgi procesiji mimo nje.

Z muko so se njene misli za hip utrgele sedanosti in bežala nazaj. Ustvarile so slike preteklosti, sedanosti jih je s čudovito lučjo obsevala.

Kaj je bilo vse, kar se je do tistega hipa zgodilo, same deklishe sanje?

Gospa Vera se je zagledala v sijaju svojega poročnega dne. Bela obleka in bel venec. Praznični svatje, godba in pokanje možnarjev. Okrašena cerkev, petje, svečan glas duhovnika in svetost obreda.

Pokleknila je pred oltar, poleg nje je pokleknil njen zaročenec. Bil je bled, resen. Kadar koli jo je pogledal, se je bridko resno nasmehnil.

Kaj je pomenil ta njegov bridkorsni nasmeh? Kaj njegova pelinova bridkost? Vera je pomislila daleč nazaj. Trudno je napela možgane, ni se mogla natančno domisliti.

Domislila se je živo le svojih tedanjih sanj. Trepetanja, ki je šlo skozi njeno telo, nemira ženske, ki stoji pred zagrinjalom novega življenja, komaj slutnih, neodgrnjenih tajnosti. Bojazni pred tem življenjem in strahu, da se ji obeti obljubljenosti sreče se v zadnjem trenutku ne odmaknejo.

Ko je zdrknil poročni prstan na prst njene roke, je padla ena teža s srca, druga se je navela nanj. Kaj ste, deklishe sanje? Kaj je bila Verina ljubezen?

Občutila je živo, da jo on resnično ljubi. Če ga je ona ljubila, si ni znala odgovoriti do tistega dne. Tega odgovora si je bila dolžna na veke. Bilo ji je, kakor da jo je premagala trdnost njegove ljubezni. Njeno nagnjenje do njega je izviralo bolj iz razuma nego iz srca. Bila je v srcu komaj iskrica, ki v zakonu vzgori v tisto mero ljubezni, ki je za življenje neobhodno potrebna.

Vera se je stresnila ob pogledu vase. Spomnila se je čustva do lepega kmečkega mladeniča. Ogenj, ki je bil takrat v nji, do tiste minute ni popolnoma ugasnil. Premagovala se je. Spomnila se je, da ji je v noči pred poroko neprestano lebdela pred očmi podoba tega mladeniča. Vzdihovala je v dušni bolečini: kaj bo iz tega? In vendar ga je odklonila le radi tega, ker ni marala trpeti in delati.

Ko ji je teta na poročno jutro devala venec na glavo, ji je dejala karajoče: "Neumnica. Ljubezen pride. Ljubezen in sreča je tam, kjer je kruh."

Njena predstava o zakonu je dobila svojo določeno obliko. Med njo in možem je nerazdružljiva vez kot trajna pogodba med gospodarjem, ker potrebuje služabnika za svojo srečo, in med hlapcem, ki radi ljubezni potrebuje gospodarja, da mu vdano služi. In ona? Ona mu izkazuje spoštovanje in hvaležnost za svojo srečo.

To je vse! To je neskončnost zmote. V njeno življenje se je odprla ogromna praznina, ki je bila še strašnejša od dejstva, da nista imela otroka. Njegovo življenje sta izpolnjevala ljubezen in delo. A ona, ona?

Vse dni je med štirimi stenami, vse dni je razmišljala v enoličnosti svojega življenja, prvi vetreček je zrušil vse. In vendar sta nerazdružljiva, večno zvezana. Strašno! Strašno! no! ...

34.

Gospa Vera se je splašala iz svojih sanj. Zakrčila je z rokami, kakor da se pod ruši in se strop prodira nad njo.

"Tega mora biti konec", je dejala.

"Nocoj se mora dovršiti."

Ni vedela kako, ni znala, kaj naj stori. Komaj podzavestno se je zavedala, da se z veliko naglico oblači in odpravlja in da trepeta slednja žilica v njenem telesu.

Jedva na ulici se je napol zavedala same sebe. Bežala je ob hišah, kakor da gori za njo. Iskala je nekoga neutrudno v gručah ljudi, pred kavarnami in na trotoarjih, ni ga mogla najti.

"Nocoj se mora dovršiti."

Kaj? ... Nenadoma je stala pred cerkvijo. Ko se je odpočila na vrhu stopnic pod ogromnimi stebri panteonskega poslopja, ji je šinila v glavo čudna misel.

Kakor da ne pozna več tega poslopja in ne ve njegovega pomena, je zrla v stene. Nizka vrata so bila zaprta, ob stebrih in ob vходу se je zgrinjal mističen mrak.

Rada bi bila vstopila v svetlišče. Predočila si je živo globoki mrak pod visoko kupolo in je v duhu razločevala predmete. V velikem oltarju luč. Redki ljudje so v klopih, zdelo se ji je, da glasovi duhovnikov v noči prodirajo iz neznane globine za velikim oltarjem. Kakor da so glasovi izprašujoče vesti.

Nehote je klecnila. Pretreslo jo je. Kot da je padel zastor in ločil dušo od ostalega sveta. Jeknila je v svoji notranjosti. Sklenila je roki, oči je uprla v relief nad vhomom, moliti ni mogla. Šepetala je nezmyselnim molitvi podobne besede. Nekaj je bilo v srce, življenje ulice je bilo premočno v nji, stika z Bogom ni mogla najti.

Cudno, prečudno se je pretakalo. Cista duševnost se ji je izmikala. Bila je razkosana, bori se je s spomini: To je bilo davno, kaj je danes? In kakor da so prišli spomini iz sobe za njo, se je tepla z njimi.

Spomnila se je svojega detinstva in prvih odnošajev z odnošajev z Bogom; materine molitve in prvega obhajila. Vseh prebelih nedelj, petja in dišečega kadila. Njihova cerkev je bila svetla, petje veselo, pogovor z Bogom tistih dni je bil radosten, le lahek dih strahu božjega je plaval nad vsem.

Potem pa se je nenadoma vse spremenilo. Mati je umrla, ona je stopila v zakon. Misli je, da je s svojo notranjostjo obračunala, da ne potrebuje nikogar več. Stokrat je dejala svojemu možu: Ti si moj Bog! Pri tej besedi je bilo malo razuma, a resnice mnogo. Hotela je reči: Moje brezskrbno, sito življenje je moj Bog.

Mož se ji je smejal. Na to besedo jo je stisnil k sebi, bila mu je ljubša. Ni se več bal za posest svoje ljubezni. Njega je molila, on je njen začetek in konec.

Po svoji vzgoji in po vsem ostalem Krševan nikoli ni potreboval tistega duhovnega življenja, ki se pogovarja z večnostjo in z vsem neznanim in išče utehe v tem. Njegova resnost je bila v njegovi naturi, ne v razmišljanju.

Ce se je pokrižala žena, se ji ni posmeheval, pokrižal pa se ni nikoli. Ob njem in ob sreči, ki jo je živila, je opustila gospa Vera pogovarjanje z onostranim in večno zagonetnim. V najtežji uri je zmanjkala opora duše.

"Prepozno, prepozno!" je dihala gospa Vera v mističen mrak pred vrati cerkve, njena duša pa se je borila s sencami, ki so budile vest.

(Dalje prihodnjič)

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FOR VICTORY—Buy
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JANUARY 24, 1944

Suggestions To Income Tax Payers

By Marian Mihaljevich

In my twenty years of Income Tax experience, I have never come across one that is more complicated, than the 1943 returns. Therefore, I will take the liberty of making a few recommendations and suggestions to all the workers and to all property and business owners.

1. Consider your Income Tax your private business.
2. Never go to your Income Tax man, unless you have with you the following: Form 1040A or 1040, Form 1125 which will come with your 1040 or 1040A Forms, Form W-2 which your employer should give to you. When you get all this and your Social Security number, you may proceed to make your income tax.

Property owners should in all instances this year be very careful to whom they trust their returns. There can be as much as \$300 or \$500 difference in your income tax, if the same is not properly filled out. The same thing holds true for any kind of business.

Property and business owners should have ready: gross income of business or property. Gross paid out for merchandise, for labor, gas and oil and truck operating expenses, insurance, heat and light, telephone and all other expenses connected with operating business. If you do this, you will save a lot of time to the man who makes your returns. In regards to rental property, please bear in mind the following: If you are an owner of a two family house and you live in one suite, you must keep separate accounts of all your expenses, such as: remodeling, repairs, decorating, and other incidentals with the upkeep of property. Bring in

March of Dimes Campaign



Young Louise Hodgson wrote a letter . . . and the American people replied through the annual March of Dimes. Louise wanted a chance to make her own way, work for her own living. Now she will have that chance. Here she is shown on her way to the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation for treatments that will help her fight Infantile Paralysis.

The March of Dimes, the chance of the "common man" to help relieve human suffering, today is making its 1944 appeal. From now until January 30th, the birthday of President Roosevelt, himself a former victim of infantile paralysis, the citizens of every community

have the opportunity to do their share in the fight against this crippling disease. Infantile paralysis is no respecter of persons; it strikes rich and poor, alike, leaving its mark on the helpless victim. Yet, through the research and the educational work of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, the menace of this enemy on the home front gradually is being reduced. The March of Dimes insures that this progress will be continued.

The March of Dimes is your chance to relieve human suffering. Give now! Give generously! Give all you can! Join the March of Dimes!

Now for the KNOCKOUT!



Have you done your part in the

YOUR gallant fighting men are giving all they've got to put over the knockout blow. But you must do your share to back them up. Your share in this all-out drive means investing in War Bonds until it hurts. The very least you can do

is invest in at least one extra hundred dollar Bond (costs \$75). . . and as many more as possible. Help your company meet its quota. Display the 4th War Loan emblem at home. Do this and you'll help your country . . . help yourself.

Let's All BACK THE ATTACK!

4th WAR LOAN?

This is an official U. S. Treasury advertisement—prepared under the auspices of Treasury Department and War Advertising Council.

NIKOLA TESLA

Great Yugoslav-American Scientist

(Continuation)

What more can one say of Tesla? Just by taking short excerpts written by some of our most famous people, by people who knew Tesla, by people who understood his work and his amazing ability one could go on for columns and columns, for issues and issues but let me just quote from a message he wrote in April 1942 to his "brothers in America": "President Roosevelt and war-production chief Donald Nelson have again directed an appeal to the American people—to workers and employers—to fulfill as much as possible the projected plan of production of war materials. On that depend the success and resistance and millions of lives in conquered nations. It is the duty of every honest man to respond to the call of the great American President, one of the greatest geniuses in hundreds of years. But in order to answer that call there must be complete unity among us. Any conflict among those who are called upon to contribute their utmost, destroys our common war effort and gives assistance to the forces of evil.

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, as the oldest Serb, Yugoslav and American of our blood in the United States, I am sending this letter to you urging you to answer the call of President Roosevelt. The deeds of our brothers in the old country are worthy of the spirit which permeates our folk-lore. What spiritual strength, unbreakable determination, fearlessness, and heroism belong to our still undeveloped boys who joyously shouted, while facing German guns: 'We are Serbian children, Shoot!' . . . The glorious martyrs will live for centuries in our memories inspiring us to immortal deeds.

"Let us not allow that greatness to be minimized through the spreading of hatred—not against the forces of evil—but against our own brothers. The destiny of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the old country is indivisible no matter what the enemy might attempt to do. United we appear more powerful and more noble. United we can fulfill our duty toward the martyrdom of our people, toward America, toward humanity. Whoever works differently is not on the right road."

One of my favorite Tesla quotations is: "Behold the dark threat veiled in words of flame One child in misery is a nation's shame!" Yes, Tesla was a great Yugoslav-American scientist and it was most gratifying to learn that the Maritime Commission of the United States had decided to name a liberty ship "Nikola Tesla" in his honor. When Admiral Land notified Tesla's nephew, Dr. Sava N. Kosano-

vich of the ship launching and requested him to invite a number of people he wished to be present at the launching. I certainly considered myself most fortunate to be among those invited. Dr. Sava N. Kosanovich selected Mrs. Vlasta Subasic, wife of the governor general of Croatia as sponsor of the liberty ship. Among other distinguished guests were: Dr. Ivan Subasic, governor of Croatia; author, Louis Adamic, Zarko Buncick, chairman of the Serbian Congress, Zlatko Balokovich, famous violin artist and chairman of the Croatian Congress, Etbin Kristan, chairman of the Slovenian National American Council, the prominent ship-owner, Mr. Petrino-vich, representative of the Yugoslav Merchant Marine, Captain Antunovich and Mr. Babin, the director of the Yugoslav Information Center, Dr. S. Gavrilovich, chief of the Press Bureau of the JIC, Bogdan Radica, Dr. Nicholas Mirkovich, Mrs. Boris Furlan, Misses Charlotte Muzar, Mary Kraljich. To describe the launching and my feelings would take columns. September 25th, 1943, witnessing the launching of the liberty ship "Nikola Tesla" at the Bethlehem Fairfield Shipyards in Baltimore, Md. will always remain in my memory as one of the most exciting and happiest days of my life.

Having seen the "Nikola Tesla" ship leave the slip and splash into the water I naturally thought this was most certainly the first and last time I would see this great ship. However I did later have the opportunity and good fortune to secure a series of pictures of this ship and the entire launching ceremony which are my cherished possession and which greatly fascinated my friends in Cleveland when I so proudly displayed my (yet incomplete) Tesla "scrapbook" which contains them during my recent stay at home . . . It is difficult to relate the thrill and anxiety of the possibility of again seeing the "Tesla" liberty ship after it has served for three months. And a coincidence to say the least. On January 7th, the first anniversary of the death of Nikola Tesla I had the opportunity to see the "Nikola Tesla" liberty ship docked in the waters of the Hudson River. Although now only "Nikol" remains of the freshly white painted "Nikola Tesla" inscription which stood out so clearly Sept. 25th, 1943 and service and travel are written all over it.

I am sure that just as Tesla's work shall live and serve eternally, the "Nikola Tesla" liberty ship will sail and serve and its end will be an honorable as was that of the great Yugoslav-American scientist, Nikola Tesla whose name it carries.

Anne Traven

